

MODULE 1A

ORIENTATION TO THE FIRE SERVICE

Student Guide



Introduction

Purpose of this module. The purpose of this module is to provide you, the recruit firefighter, a basic understanding of the fire service and your role within that service. This training is mandated by state regulation for all entry level firefighters.

Scope of this module. For the next two and one-half hours, we will discuss the organization, roles and function of the fire service. This is testable material, so be sure to take notes.



Objectives By the end of this module, you will:

1. Know the mission of the fire service with regards to prevention, preparation, response, and emergency medical services.
2. Be able to describe the chain of command within your fire department and describe the role of a firefighter.
3. Know what other agencies respond with your department and the role each plays in the emergency response system.

Conditions. The instruction you receive in this module is intended for firefighter recruits, meaning, it is our assumption that you know little or nothing about firefighting. Instruction will take place here in a classroom environment. We will use lecture and conference methods to deliver your instruction.

Every individual within an organization needs to understand the organization and organizational structure in order to be an effective part of it. Therefore, let's begin by looking at the mission of the fire service.



Fire Service Mission

The basic tasks of firefighters are the same all over the world: life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation.

Many variables affect the way agencies provide fire protection for:

- Community development.
- Residential structures.
- Commercial and industrial complexes.
- Critical infrastructure (sewer, water, electric, gas, etc.).

Fire fighting is one of the world's most honored but hazardous occupations. It requires:

- A high sense of personal dedication.
- A genuine desire to help people.
- A high level of skill.

A **mission statement** is a written declaration by a fire agency which describes the things it intends to do to protect its citizens or customers.

All firefighters should understand their department mission statement and how they can contribute to their department's success.

Here is an example of fire department mission statements. The two most important components of these examples are "who" and "what". You want others to know who you are and what you intend to be or accomplish. Mission statements relay what the organization is intended to be or do.

Fire Service Mission Statement

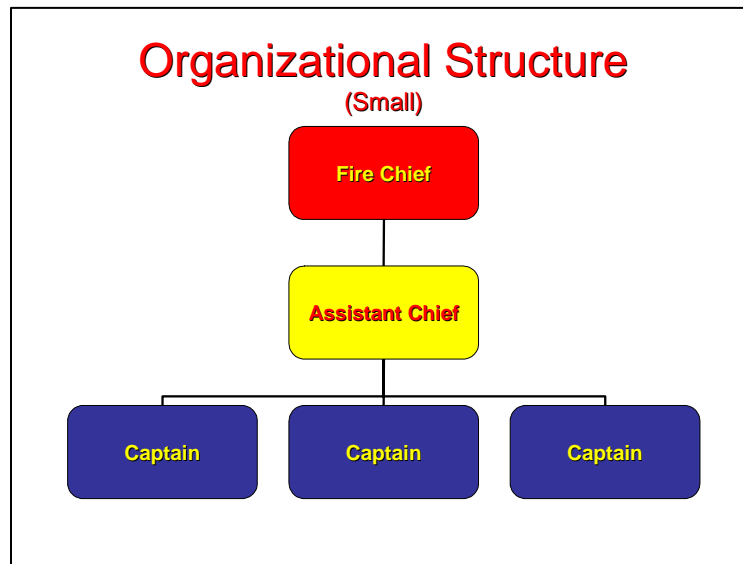
(Sample)

- The XYZ Fire Department will develop education programs that will help the public prevent fire and accidents.
- The XYZ Fire Department will respond rapidly with adequate staffing to fire, medical emergency and other catastrophic events to save lives reduce damage.
- The XYZ Fire Department will provide the staff of the department with leadership that will enhance their work experience.



Fire Service Organization

The size and organizational structure of fire departments range from small volunteer companies, protecting small populations to large metropolitan departments, protecting millions of people.



Firefighters should understand a non-emergency table of organization chart based upon their fire department. The command chart should have titles, names of responsible person and responsibilities description. Fire departments need a strong organization with people responsible for important functions. The organization has a functional chain-of-command that maintains discipline within the ranks. In some cases, it is a simple thing like discipline that keeps people alive in emergency situations.

The Modern Fire Service.

It is estimated that there are over 30,000 fire departments in the United States.

22,000 fire departments are staffed with volunteers. 5,000 fire departments are staffed with a combination of career and volunteers. 3,000 fire departments are staffed only with career personnel. There are 850,000 firefighters throughout the United States.



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- 600,000 are volunteers.
- 250,000 are career.



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The fire service of today is not traditional in the historical sense. It provides a vast array of services that have very little to do with fire suppression. Fire suppression is a necessary skill for every firefighter in addition to being a chemical expert, deliverer of babies, and rescuer of victims from a variety of disasters.

The fire service of today is a very diverse, complicated system of delivery.

Regardless, the fire service of today contains a great deal of the past. We have become what we are today based on our past experiences. The basic mission of saving lives and property has not changed, only the manner and means to cope with the problem have.

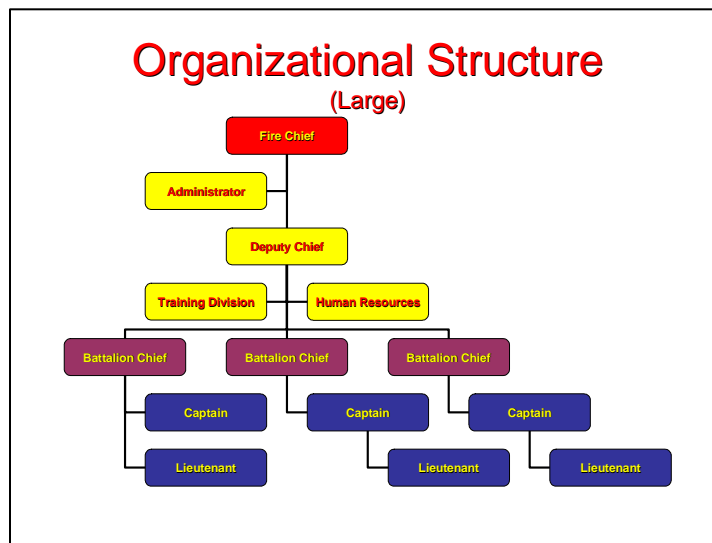
Fire Department Organization.

Fire departments, like any other organization, have a reason for existing and a structure for operations.

Fire protection is the business of providing help to people during emergency and non-emergency operations.

Organizational Structure. A fire department must have some type of organizational structure.

Operational.



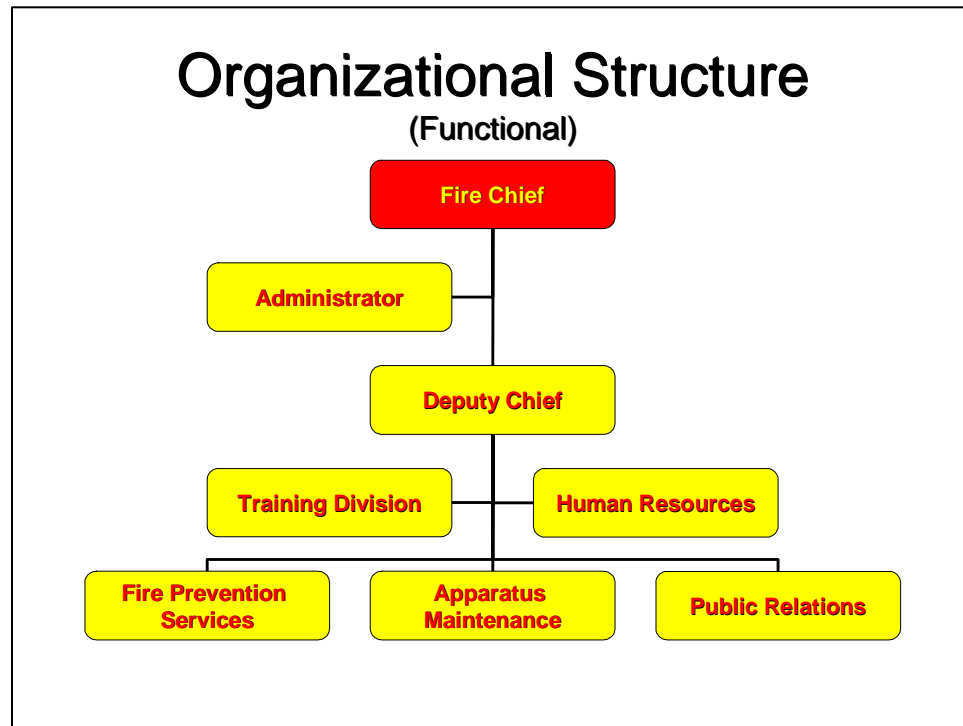
Functional--specific job assignment accompanies rank.



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The structure may show how internal functions and responsibilities are delegated in the organization.

The structure can show the interdependence of the community, governing body, fire department, and firefighters.



Organizational Principles:

Unity of command — Having one designated leader or officer-in-charge of an operation, company, or single resource. (Not to be confused with “Chain-of-Command, where a person can report to only one supervisor.)

Span of control — Number of personnel one individual can effectively manage.

Division of labor — Divide large jobs into small jobs.

Assign responsibility.

Prevent duplication of effort.

Make specific and clear-cut assignments.

Discipline — Setting the limits or boundaries for expected performance.



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The Firefighter

A firefighter is usually defined as a member of a fire department who is trained in fire prevention and suppression.

Depending on a fire department's mission statement, the firefighter may be required to have training in other areas such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hazardous materials, and rescue.

Firefighter I and II NFPA 1001, *Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications*, outlines the necessary skills and abilities of a firefighter. The State of Indiana Mandatory training program will provide the firefighter candidate with many of the competencies measured in the FFI qualifications.



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The Company

In the career fire service today, the standard organization of a fire company consists of engine, truck (also known as ladder), and rescue companies.



A company is usually under the direction of a captain, who has lieutenants who assist with the various tasks.



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The Engine Company.

The engine company is organized to provide firefighters who deliver water at the fire scene, deploy hose lines, and attack and extinguish fires in vehicles and structures. NFPA 1901 states that a pumper should carry no less than 300 gallons of water and have a fire pump with at least 750 gallons-per-minute capacity.

The Truck Company.

The primary function of the truck company (also known as a ladder company) is to provide firefighters for forcible entry, search and rescue, ventilation, ladders, securing utilities, and overhaul functions. NFPA 1901 states that aerial fire apparatus should have a minimum of 115 feet of ground ladders.

The Rescue Company.

The rescue or squad company provides firefighters and equipment for specialized rescues.

Specialty/Combination Units.

- A quint is a combination of an engine and a ladder and can perform either function as necessary on a fire scene.
- NFPA 1901 states that a quint must have a permanently mounted fire pump and water tank, an area to store hose, an aerial device with a permanently mounted waterway, and at least 85 feet of ground ladders.
- Mobile water supply apparatus are located in areas where a water supply is not present. May be known as tankers or tenders in some areas. NFPA 1901 states mobile water supply apparatus must carry a minimum of 1000 gallons of water.



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- Other types of specialty units include wildland firefighting or brush firefighting response units, aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) apparatus, light and air units, hazardous materials units, mass casualty response units, and water rescue and firefighting apparatus.



Brush Company



Hazardous Materials Company

Emergency Medical Services.

Many fire departments also provide emergency medical services at the ALS or BLS level.

Some fire departments may operate ambulances to provide transport services.



Emergency Medical Company

The Chief Officers.

The chief of the department is ultimately responsible for the overall operations and administration of the fire department.

Those departments that are staffed primarily with volunteers have a similar organizational structure as outlined above.



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The exception is that there is no consistency in the company staffing. The staffing on a particular piece of apparatus responding to a emergency response will be different on most occasions.



Apparatus Driver/Operator

Apparatus driver/operator

- Drives assigned fire apparatus
- Operates pumps
- Operates aerial devices or other mechanical equipment



Safety Officer

Fire department officer

- Supervises a fire company
- Performs assignments including operations, personnel/administration, public information, fire prevention, resources, and planning



Communications Personnel

Safety officer

- Oversees occupational safety and health program.
- Monitors the operational safety of emergency incidents.

Communications/telecommunications personnel

- Takes emergency and non-emergency phone calls.
- Processes information.
- Dispatches units.
- Maintains and provides communication link to companies in service.
- Completes incident reports.



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Additional Fire Department Functions.

Due to the complex issues and tasks facing a fire department, many additional functions are assigned to its operation.

Fire Prevention and Life Safety. Most departments have a fire prevention officer tasked with two functions: code enforcement/inspection services and fire/life safety education.

Training.

The training division of a fire department administers and documents training activities for the department.

- Training officer/chief of training/drillmaster — *Administers all fire department training activities*
- Instructor — *Delivers training courses to the other members of the department*



Emergency Medical Services.

In fire departments that provide EMS, this function may be a separate division within the fire department. There are three levels of training/certification: First Responder (50 hours); Emergency Medical Technician (180 hours); and Paramedic (1600 hours).

- First responder — *Sustains patient's life until more competent medical personnel arrive*
- Emergency medical technician — *Is trained to provide basic life support*
- Paramedic
 - Handles incidents similar to those handled by EMT
 - Provides advanced life support



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Special Operations.

Some fire departments may have a special operations section that responds to hazardous materials incidents, confined space rescue, high-rise operations, air operations, and swift water, or ice rescue. Historically, the basic unit of the fire department is a company, a team of firefighters assigned to an apparatus to perform a specific function. The company officer is often a captain, although many jurisdictions use differing rank structures and titles. Firefighters should be familiar with their department's rank structure.



- Airport firefighter
 - Protects life and property
 - Controls fire hazards
 - General duties related to airport operations and aircraft safety
- Hazardous materials technician
 - Handles hazards materials
 - Handles nuclear, biological, and chemical emergencies

Regulations, Policies, Bylaws, and Procedures

All organizations must have regulations, policies, and procedures in order to operate in an effective manner.

Regulations.

Regulations are the rules that determine how an organization operates and are usually established by top-level management or a governing body.

Policies are formal statements or directives

Policies & Procedures

- **Policy** — *Guide to thinking or decision making*
- **Procedure** — *Detailed guide to action*
- **Order** — *Command based upon a policy or procedure*
- **Directive** — *Instructions not based upon a policy or procedure*

Rule of Thumb

On the fire ground all utterances are generally considered orders.



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established by fire department managers to provide guidance in the decision-making process.

Bylaws.

Fire departments staffed by volunteers are sometimes organized as independent corporations.

The volunteer fire department board of directors will establish bylaws in addition to regulations or policies.

Procedures.

Procedures are often referred to as standard operating procedures (SOPs).

SOPs provide specific information and instructions on how a task is to be performed or assignment is to be established.

SOPs are established so that all members of a department will uniformly perform the same function.

This text uses SOP terminology, although some departments may use “Standard Operating Guidelines” (SOG) as an alternative.

When developing SOPs, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Address the who, what, when, where, and how of the topic.
- Firefighter safety is the first consideration.
- SOPs should be brief, clear, and concise.
- Lengthy SOPs should be broken into smaller sections.
- SOPs must be reviewed at least once every three years because of their dynamic nature.
- Methods for changing SOPs should be defined.

- Predetermined plan for nearly every type of emergency conceivable.
- Fireground priorities:
 - Life safety.
 - Incident stabilization.
 - Property conservation.
- Regulations on dress, conduct, vacation and sick leave, and station life and duties.



Allied Agencies and Organizations

During any operation, the fire department and firefighters interact with many people and organizations.

Depending on the jurisdiction, several agencies may work together. They include:

- Police.
- Emergency Management Agency.
- Public works.
- Utility companies.
- Environmental protection agencies.
- Private business.
- Health Department.

It is important to maintain open communication and good relations with the various cooperating agencies/organizations.

Review and Closing

Review. During this module, we have discussed some things relating to the fire service. These included:

1. Knowing the mission of the fire service with regards to prevention, preparation, response and emergency medical services.
2. Being able to describe the chain of command within their fire department and describe the role of a firefighter.
3. Knowing what other agencies respond with their department and the role each plays in the response.

Closing. You, as a firefighter are a member of an organization that is important to the community, the fire department. For the organization to function effectively, each member must understand its composition and how it operates.



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FIREFIGHTER'S CREED

When I'm called to duty God, Wherever flames may rage
Give me strength to save a life whatever be its age
Help me to embrace a little child before it is too late
Or save an older person from the horror of that fate
Enable me to be alert to hear the weakest shout
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me
To guard my neighbor and protect his property
And if according to your will I have to lose my life
Bless with your protecting hand my children and my wife

The "Fireman's Wife" story uses the term "fireman". The use of the term fireman is not meant to detract from the contributions made by female firefighters. This story is about a wife and the use of the term fireman refers to the husband.

FIREMAN'S WIFE

The table's set, the meals prepared, our guests will soon arrive.
My husband once more disappears with a hope of keeping a child alive
While waiting at home again alone, our plans having gone awry
My first impulse is merely to sit down and cry.
But soon again I realize the importance of my life
When I agreed to take on the duties of being a fireman's wife
While there are many drawbacks, I'll take them in my stride
The gusting winds and raging flames may be his final fate,
But with God's help I can remain my fireman's faithful mate.
Author Unknown

A FIREFIGHTER'S LIFE

A Firefighter's life is more than just the sound of the siren or the crackling of the flame.
Firefighters have friends and family who worry about their safety but who also share many joyful and happy times together.
To all those people who have lost a husband, wife, or loved one who has made the ultimate sacrifice in order to save another's life.



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THE LAST ALARM

The Last Alarm

My father was a fireman, he drove a big red truck,
And when he'd go to work each night, he'd say, "Mother wish me luck".
Then Dad would not come home again, 'til sometime the next day,
But the thing that bothered me most, was the things some folks would say. A fireman's life is
easy, he eats and sleeps and plays,
And sometimes he don't fight a fire for days and days and days.
When I first heard these comments, I was too young to understand
because I knew; when people had trouble Dad was there to lend a hand.
Then my father went to work one day and kissed us all good-bye,
But little did we realize, that night, we all would cry.
My father gave his life that night, when the floor gave way below,
And I wondered why he'd risk his life, for someone he didn't know.
But now I realize, the greatest gift a man could give,
Is to lay his life upon the line, so that someone else may live.
So as we go from day to day, and we pray to God above,
Say a prayer for your local fireman, he may save the one you love.
(Jim Martinez 7th District Vice-President)

THE NEW RECRUIT

The guys on our departments were shocked beyond belief
When a female member was added approved by the Chief!
She wasn't very friendly the first day on the scene,
I'd call her downright feisty just short of being mean.
It's said our Chief is "macho"; he stepped in and took command,
And soon this pretty lady was eating from his hand.
The shock waves soon were over; our fears were swept away,
She obeyed his every order improving by the day.
Attracted by her beauty, he loved her from the start,
They'd walk each night together; rarely would they part.
She'd smother him with kisses even nibble on his ear,
Sat beside him on the pumper, never showing any fear.
He'd scratch her back; brush her hair; pinch her little nose,
Their love just seemed to blossom, like petals on a rose.
His intentions were most honorable; pride runneth from his cup,
For the new recruit was fully trained a new Dalmatian pup!

